



# Camping Management Plan

## St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls to Stillwater

Camping is a popular recreational activity at the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway). For generations, people have used the islands and shorelines for camping. A multi-year public planning effort to develop a cooperative management plan (CMP) for the Riverway identified a number of concerns related to camping along the Riverway and called for the development of a camping management plan for the portion of the Riverway between St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls and Stillwater. The CMP, which was completed in 2001, identified the goals of the camping management plan as follows:

- reduce the impact of human waste
- reduce the trampling and loss of vegetation
- reduce shoreline and island erosion
- protect and enhance natural resource conditions
- protect cultural resources
- reduce user conflicts and
- protect the rights of private landowners.

The National Park Service (NPS) initiated the camping management planning process in the Fall of 2003 by asking the public to help us identify the full scope of camping related issues between St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls and north



**Campers on the St. Croix Riverway.**

Stillwater and to suggest solutions. Over 400 copies of Newsletter 1 were distributed from Fall 2003 through Spring 2004. Public meetings were held in Taylors Falls and Stillwater, Minnesota in December 2003. The issues identified include trash and human body waste, resource damage, competition for campsites, and trespass and noise disturbance to private landowners. A full list of the issues identified and the suggested solutions can be accessed at [http://www.nps.gov/sacn/new/public\\_notices.html](http://www.nps.gov/sacn/new/public_notices.html).

The results of public scoping verified that a camping management plan is needed and

that the goals identified in the CMP address current camping related issues. Because significant growth is expected in the counties that border the Riverway, particularly in Washington County, Minnesota, and St. Croix County, Wisconsin, these issues could become even more pressing. As local population increases, recreational pressure on the Riverway also is expected to increase. Planning for increased pressure is critical to protect Riverway resources and the quality of the recreational experience. In this newsletter the National Park Service is introducing several alternatives for camping management for public review and input.

# Goals and Proposed Management Actions

The National Park Service has identified a number of actions that could be taken to meet the goals of the camping management plan. Many of the solutions suggested by the public have been incorporated into the proposed management actions.

## **Goal 1: Reduce the impact of human waste**

Establish designated campsites in areas that can accommodate a pit toilet 100' from the normal high water level; require self-contained toilets at designated campsites that cannot accommodate a pit toilet; institute a camping pass system to insure that campers are informed about Riverway regulations.

## **Goal 2: Reduce trampling and loss of vegetation**

Confine camping related impacts to specific areas by establishing designated campsites; establish group size limits; shorten the length of stay; and temporarily close designated campsites when needed for rehabilitation.

## **Goal 3: Reduce shoreline and island erosion**

Confine camping related impacts to specific areas by establishing designated campsites; provide tie-ups for self-contained boats; provide stairs and other appropriate erosion control measures at designated campsites; temporarily close designated campsites when needed for rehabilitation.

## **Goal 4: Protect and enhance natural resources**

Establish designated campsites in areas that minimize impact to natural resources; establish group size limits; institute a camping pass system to insure that campers are informed about Riverway regulations.

## **Goal 5: Protect cultural resources**

Establish designated campsites in areas that minimize impacts to cultural resources.

## **Goal 6: Reduce user conflicts**

Shorten the length of stay; require day users to vacate campsites by 4:00pm; institute a permit or reservation system to allocate sites in advance.

## **Goal 7: Protect the rights of private landowners**

Establish designated campsites in areas that minimize conflict with private landowners; establish group size limits; institute a camping pass system to insure that campers are informed about Riverway regulations.

## **Campsite Location**

Criteria were developed to help locate suitable areas to establish designated campsites. The criteria reflect the goals of the camping management plan and are as follows:

1. The location is on land owned by the National Park Service.
2. The location can accommodate a pit toilet at least 100 feet from the water and outside the normal high water floodplain.\*
3. Access to the location is such that visitors can approach and land a boat or canoe safely.
4. Sufficient level ground exists for fire ring, tent pads and an eating area.
5. The location will minimize impacts to private landowners along the Riverway.
6. The location will minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources.



(\*Note: Due to the narrowness of the islands, Riverway-wide application of this criterion would have precluded proposing designated campsites between Arcola Sandbar and Stillwater. Management alternatives for this stretch would require campers to use onboard or carry-in, carry-out toilets.)



## Campsite Location continued.

Riverway staff completed an inventory of areas traditionally used for camping on the St. Croix between St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls and north Stillwater. These areas were identified by evidence of bank use and the presence of informal fire rings. The criteria were applied to these traditionally used areas and many were found to be suitable to develop into designated campsites. Designated campsites would consist of a campsite sign, a fire ring, an area for tents, and, upstream of Arcola Sandbar, a pit toilet. Picnic tables may also be provided if the site is not flood prone.



Designated campsite on the St. Croix Riverway.

Below Arcola Sandbar there are **two** alternatives being considered. Either all sites would be tie-ups only for self-contained boats with on-board sleeping, dining and toilet facilities **or** tent campers would also be accommodated but required to provide their own carry-in, carry-out toilets.

Maps that show the proposed locations for designated campsites or tie-ups can be accessed at [http://www.nps.gov/sacn/new/public\\_notices.html](http://www.nps.gov/sacn/new/public_notices.html) and will be available for inspection at the open houses scheduled for November. Copies can also be requested by calling the phone number listed on page 4.

## Alternatives Under Consideration

Proposed management actions have been grouped into various management alternatives. Alternatives represent different ways to meet a project's goals. The "no action" alternative is always carried forward for analysis in Federal planning efforts, even if it does not meet project goals, because it sets a baseline of existing conditions against which to compare the impacts of the other alternatives.

Alternatives currently under consideration for camping management are summarized in tables located on page 4. All the alternatives which retain camping as a recreational use on the Riverway include designated campsites and/or tie-up locations for self-contained boats to direct campers to appropriate places to camp and minimize the conflicts and confusion created by the patchwork of private, State and Federal landownership along the river.

## Allocation Systems

There are many types of systems used to manage the demand for camping in recreation areas. These systems range from passes issued strictly to inform campers of applicable regulations to permits issued to manage competition and allocate campsites in advance. Refer to the table on page 4.

## Next Steps

Following the close of the comment period the NPS will:

1. Release draft camping management plan-environmental analysis-cost estimates (Spring 2006)
2. Select an alternative (Summer 2006)\*
3. Implement selected alternative (2006/2007)
4. Monitor effectiveness (Ongoing)

*\*Note:* Implementation of the selected alternative would be phased in along the Riverway.

**Table 1: Summary of Alternatives: Campsite Type**

	<b>Alternative 1: No Action</b>	<b>Alternative 2: Designated Campsites</b>	<b>Alternative 3: Designated Campsites and Tie-ups for Self-contained Boats</b>	<b>Alternative 4: No Camping</b>
<b>Camping Locations</b>	Open camping on NPS land in “open camping” and “island camping only” zones	Camping in designated campsites.	<i>Above Arcola Sandbar:</i> Camping in designated campsites. <i>Below Arcola Sandbar:</i> Designated tie-ups for boats with on-board sleeping, dining and toilet facilities. No tent camping.	No camping on NPS land.
<b>Facilities</b>	Few facilities except toilets, water, and fire rings at Eagle’s Nest and toilets on Mile Long Island	<i>Above Arcola Sandbar:</i> Sign, fire ring, pit toilet, picnic table if not flood prone. <i>Below Arcola Sandbar:</i> Sign and fire ring	<i>Above Arcola Sandbar:</i> Same as Alternative 2 <i>Below Arcola Sandbar:</i> Sign and tie-up post	Not Applicable
<b>Group Size Limits</b>	None	<i>Individual sites:</i> 8 people <i>Group Sites:</i> 9-16 people	<i>Above Arcola Sandbar:</i> Same as Alternative 2 <i>Below Arcola Sandbar:</i> Two self-contained boats	Not Applicable
<b>Length of Stay</b>	7 nights, 30 days for season	3 nights, 30 days for season	Same as Alternative 2	Not Applicable

**Table 2: Summary of Alternatives: Campsite Allocation Systems**

	<b>Alternative A: No Action</b>	<b>Alternative B: Camping Pass</b>	<b>Alternative C: Overnight Permits</b>	<b>Alternative D: Reservations</b>
<b>Type of System</b>	First come, first serve	First come, first serve. However, campers must possess a camping pass which informs them of Riverway regulations.	Overnight permits allocate campsites within a particular river segment (Ex: Franconia to Osceola). Permit allows camping in any designated campsite within that river segment.	Reservations allow camping in a specifically assigned campsite.

## The NPS Wants Your Feedback

We encourage you to write to us if you have thoughts or comments about what you have read in this newsletter. Share your thoughts about the alternatives being developed to manage camping on the **Riverway between St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls and north Stillwater**. Please send your comments by **January 9, 2006**.



### You can write a letter to:

Superintendent  
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway  
401 Hamilton Street – P.O. Box 708  
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024  
Attention: Jill Medland

### You can comment online at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=13816>

### You can e-mail Jill Medland,

NPS Planning Team Coordinator at:  
jill\_medland@nps.gov

### Or you can attend the open house scheduled to share information and take comments:

**Tuesday, November 8, 6:30-8:30 pm**

Interpretive Center  
William O'Brien State Park  
Marine-on-St.-Croix, Minnesota

If you have any questions, or to request additional information, please call Jill at 715-483-3284 Ext 609 or send her an e-mail.